

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid ~~specific to *Histoplasma capsulatum* M antigen~~ comprising:

a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

~~a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;~~

~~— a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;~~

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

~~a fragment of nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1; or~~

~~— a fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;~~

wherein the nucleic acid does not contain the nucleotide sequences 5'CGAAGTCGAGGCTTCAGCATG3' (SEQ ID NO:14),
5'TATTAGCTCTAGAATTACCACGGGTATCCAAGTAGTAAGG3' (SEQ ID NO:15),

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5'CCCCGAAGGGCATTGGTTTTATCTAATAAACACCCCC3' (SEQ ID NO:16), or nucleotide sequences complementary thereto,

and wherein the nucleic acid is not a nucleic acid consisting essentially of between 10 and 100 nucleotides which is able to form a hybrid at 60°C with a nucleotide polymer having a nucleotide sequence of 5'CGAAGTCGAGGCTTCAGCATG3' (SEQ ID NO:17),
5'CAGCTGAAAGCCTCGACTTCG3' (SEQ ID NO:18),
5'CAUGCUGAAAGCCUCGACUUCG3' (SEQ ID NO:19) or
5'CGAAGUCGAGGCUUUCAGCAUG3' (SEQ ID NO:20).

2. (Original) The nucleic acid of Claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid has the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

3. (Original) The nucleic acid of Claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid has a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

4. (Canceled) The nucleic acid of Claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid has a nucleotide sequence which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

5. (Canceled) The nucleic acid of Claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid has a nucleotide sequence which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

6. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid of Claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid is an H. capsulatum M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

7. (Currently amended) The nucleic acid of Claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid is an H. capsulatum M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

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8. (Canceled) The nucleic acid of Claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid is a fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

9. (Canceled) The nucleic acid of Claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid is a fragment of a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

10. (Withdrawn) An isolated or recombinantly-produced antigen specific to *Histoplasma capsulatum* comprising:

a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

a fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1; or

a fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

11. (Withdrawn) The antigen of Claim 10, wherein the antigen is a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

12. (Withdrawn) The antigen of Claim 11, wherein the antigen has an amino acid sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:2.

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13. (Withdrawn) The antigen of Claim 10, wherein the antigen is a fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

14. (Withdrawn) The antigen of Claim 10, wherein the antigen is a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

15. (Withdrawn) The antigen of Claim 10, wherein the antigen is a fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

16. (Currently amended) A vector comprising a nucleic acid ~~specific to *Histoplasma capsulatum*~~, wherein the nucleic acid: has a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

~~has a nucleotide sequence which is substantially the same as a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;~~

is an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1; or

~~is a fragment of a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;~~

and wherein the vector is suitable for expressing the nucleic acid.

17. (Original) The vector of Claim 16, wherein the nucleic acid has a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

18. (Canceled) The vector of Claim 16, wherein the nucleic acid has a nucleotide sequence which is substantially the same as a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

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19. (Currently amended) The vector of Claim 16, wherein the nucleic acid is an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID 1.

20. (Canceled) The vector of Claim 16, wherein the nucleic acid is a fragment of a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

21. (Withdrawn) A method for detecting a previous or current *Histoplasma capsulatum* infection in a subject, comprising:

(a) contacting a fluid or tissue sample from the subject which contains antibodies with an isolated or recombinantly-produced antigen which is specific to *Histoplasma capsulatum*; and

(b) detecting the presence of binding between the antibodies and the antigen, the presence of binding indicating the presence of a previous or current *Histoplasma capsulatum* infection in a subject,

wherein the antigen is:

a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

a fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1; or

a fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

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22. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 21, wherein the antigen is a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

23. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 22, wherein the antigen has an amino acid sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:2.

24. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 21, wherein the antigen is a fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

25. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 21, wherein the antigen is a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

26. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 21, wherein the antigen is a fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

27. (Withdrawn) An isolated antibody produced against an antigen of Claim 10.

28. (Withdrawn) A kit for detecting a previous or current *Histoplasma capsulatum* infection in a sample comprising:

(a) an isolated nucleic acid of Claim 1, an isolated or recombinantly-produced antigen of Claim 10 or an isolated antibody of Claim 27; and

(b) instructions describing the use of the nucleic acid, antigen or antibody in the detection of a previous or current *Histoplasma capsulatum* infection.

29. (Withdrawn) The kit of Claim 28, wherein the kit contains an antigen, and the antigen is a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

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30. (Withdrawn) The kit of Claim 28, wherein the kit contains an antigen, and the antigen is a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

31. (Currently amended) A host for expressing a polypeptide ~~specific to *Histoplasma capsulatum*~~ comprising a vector containing a nucleic acid, wherein the vector is suitable for expressing the nucleic acid, and wherein the nucleic acid:

has a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

~~has a nucleotide sequence which is substantially the same as a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;~~

is an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1; or

~~is a fragment of a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.~~

32. (Original) The host of claim 31, wherein the nucleic acid has a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

33. (Canceled) The host of Claim 31, wherein the nucleic acid is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

34. (Withdrawn) A method for detecting a past exposure to the fungus *Histoplasma capsulatum* comprising:

(a) injecting intradermally in the skin of a patient an effective amount of an isolated or recombinantly-produced antigen which is specific to *Histoplasma capsulatum*; and

(b) observing the skin at the injection site at a predetermined time after injection for a presence of swelling of the skin, the presence of swelling of the skin indicating a past exposure by the patient to the fungus *Histoplasma capsulatum*,

wherein the polypeptide is:

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a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an antigenic fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1; or

an antigenic fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

35. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 34, wherein the antigen is a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing 5 as SEQ ID NO:1.

36. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 34, wherein the antigen is an antigenic fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

37. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 34, wherein the antigen is a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

38. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 34, wherein the antigen is a fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

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39. (Withdrawn) A vaccine for the prevention of histoplasmosis comprising:

- (a) an effective amount of a nucleic acid of claim 1 or an isolated or recombinantly-produced antigen of Claim 10; and
- (b) a pharmaceutically-acceptable carrier.

40. (Withdrawn) A method for detecting a current *H. capsulatum* infection in a subject suspected of having an *H. capsulatum* infection comprising:

- (a) contacting a fluid or tissue sample from the subject which contains antigens with antibodies generated against an antigen which contains an epitope which is unique to *H. capsulatum*; and
- (b) detecting the presence of binding between the antigens and the antibodies, the presence of binding indicating the presence of a current *H. capsulatum* infection in the subject, wherein the antigen is:

a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

a fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1; or

a fragment of a polypeptide encoded by a nucleic acid which is substantially the same as a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence, which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1.

41. (Withdrawn) An isolated *Histoplasma Capsulatum* M antigen comprising a mature polypeptide consisting essentially of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:2 starting with the serine residue of amino acid position 17.

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42. (Withdrawn) The isolated *Histoplasma Capsulatum* M antigen of claim 41, wherein the polypeptide is a recombinant polypeptide.

43. (Withdrawn) The isolated *Histoplasma Capsulatum* M antigen of claim 42, wherein the polypeptide is produced in a prokaryotic host.

44. (Withdrawn) The isolated *Histoplasma Capsulatum* M antigen of claim 41, wherein the protein does not contain carbohydrate moieties.

45. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid specific to *Histoplasma capsulatum* comprising:

a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific nucleic acid which which is 90% similar to a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific nucleic acid which which is 90% similar to a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of nucleic acid which is 90% similar to a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1; or

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an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is 90% similar to a nucleic acid which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

wherein the nucleic acid does not contain the nucleotide sequences

5'CGAAGTCGAGGCTTCAGCATG3' (SEQ ID NO:14),

5'TATTAGCTCTAGAATTACCACGGGTATCCAAGTAGTAAGG3' (SEQ ID NO:15),

5'CCCCGAAGGGCATTGGTTTTATCTAATAAACACCCCC3' (SEQ ID NO:16), or nucleotide sequences complementary thereto,

and wherein the nucleic acid is not a nucleic acid consisting essentially of between 10 and 100 nucleotides which is able to form a hybrid at 60°C with a nucleotide polymer having a nucleotide sequence of 5'CGAAGTCGAGGCTTCAGCATG3' (SEQ ID NO:17),

5'CAGCTGAAAGCCTCGACTTCG3' (SEQ ID NO:18),

5'CAUGCUGAAAGCCUCGACUUCG3' (SEQ ID NO:19) or

5'CGAAGUCGAGGCUUUCAGCAUG3' (SEQ ID NO:20).

46. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid ~~specific to~~ *Histoplasma capsulatum* comprising:

a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific nucleic acid which is 95% similar to a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific nucleic acid which is 95% similar to a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

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an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of nucleic acid which is 95% similar to a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1; or

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence which is 95% similar to a nucleic acid which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

wherein the nucleic acid does not contain the nucleotide sequences

5'CGAAGTCGAGGCTTCAGCATG3' (SEQ ID NO:14),

5'TATTAGCTCTAGAATTACCACGGGTATCCAAGTAGTAAGG3' (SEQ ID NO:15),

5'CCCCGAAGGGCATTGGTTTTATCTAATAAACACCCCC3' (SEQ ID NO:16), or nucleotide sequences complementary thereto,

and wherein the nucleic acid is not a nucleic acid consisting essentially of between 10 and 100 nucleotides which is able to form a hybrid at 60°C with a nucleotide polymer having a nucleotide sequence of 5'CGAAGTCGAGGCTTCAGCATG3' (SEQ ID NO:17),
5'CAGCTGAAAGCCTCGACTTCG3' (SEQ ID NO:18),
5'CAUGCUGAAAGCCUCGACUUCG3' (SEQ ID NO:19) or
5'CGAAGUCGAGGCUUUCAGCAUG3' (SEQ ID NO:20).

47. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid specific to *Histoplasma capsulatum* comprising:

a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

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an *H. capsulatum M antigen-specific* nucleic acid which is 90% similar to a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum M antigen-specific* nucleic acid which is 90% similar to a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum M antigen-specific* fragment of a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum M antigen-specific* fragment of a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum M antigen-specific* fragment of nucleic acid which is 90% similar to a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1; or

an *H. capsulatum M antigen-specific* fragment of a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence which is 90% similar to a nucleic acid which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

wherein the nucleic acid does not contain the nucleotide sequences 5'CGAAGTCGAGGCTTCAGCATG3' (SEQ ID NO:14), 5'TATTAGCTCTAGAATTACCACGGGTATCCAAGTAGTAAGG3' (SEQ ID NO:15), 5'CCCCGAAGGGCATTGGTTTTATCTAATAAACACACCC3' (SEQ ID NO:16), or nucleotide sequences complementary thereto,

and wherein the nucleic acid is not a nucleic acid consisting essentially of between 10 and 100 nucleotides which is able to form a hybrid at 60°C with a nucleotide polymer consisting of a nucleotide sequence of 5'CGAAGTCGAGGCTTCAGCATG3' (SEQ ID NO:17), 5'CAGCTGAAAGCCTCGACTTCG3' (SEQ ID NO:18), 5'CAUGCUGAAAGCCUCGACUUCG3' (SEQ ID NO:19) or 5'CGAAGUCGAGGCUUUCAGCAUG3' (SEQ ID NO:20).

48. (Currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid specific to *Histoplasma capsulatum* comprising:

a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific nucleic acid which is 95% similar to a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific nucleic acid which is 95% similar to a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of nucleic acid which is 95% similar to a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1; or

an *H. capsulatum* M antigen-specific fragment of a nucleic acid consisting of a nucleotide sequence which is 95% similar to a nucleic acid which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO:1;

wherein the nucleic acid does not contain the nucleotide sequences
5'CGAAGTCGAGGCTTCAGCATG3' (SEQ ID NO:14),
5'TATTAGCTCTAGAATTACCACGGGTATCCAAGTAGTAAGG3' (SEQ ID NO:15),
5'CCCCGAAGGGCATTGGTTTTATCTAATAAACACCCCC3' (SEQ ID NO:16), or
nucleotide sequences complementary thereto,

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and wherein the nucleic acid is not a nucleic acid consisting essentially of between 10 and 100 nucleotides which is able to form a hybrid at 60°C with a nucleotide polymer consisting of a nucleotide sequence of 5'CGAAGTCGAGGCTTCAGCATG3' (SEQ ID NO:17),
5'CATGCTGAAAGCCTCGACTTCG3' (SEQ ID NO:18),
5'CAUGCUGAAAGCCUCGACUUCG3' (SEQ ID NO:19) or
5'CGAAGUCGAGGCUUUCAGCAUG3' (SEQ ID NO:20).

49. (Canceled) The nucleic acid of claim 1, wherein the substantially the same nucleic acid is homologous to the nucleic acid having a nucleotide sequence as set forth in the Sequence Listing as SEQ ID NO: 1.